



# CrimeWatch

Special Edition

June 2001

"EXCELLENCE IN PROTECTION"



## Overseas VACATION SECURITY TIPS

Subject: FW: \*\* AIR  
SECURITY ALERT:  
BOMBING TRIAL  
VERDICT \*\*

**FPS**

OKLAHOMA CITY - 1995



FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE  
"FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS"

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### RE-DISSEMINATED FROM REGION 5

Air Security International wishes to call your attention to the verdict issued in the trial of four international terrorists responsible for the bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998. The jury in New York, NY issued a verdict of guilty on all charges, following 12 days of deliberations. In light of this verdict, travelers - particularly U.S.

citizens - should be aware of the increased possibility of reprisals by militant Islamic groups. Travelers should observe basic security precautions, including maintaining a heightened awareness of their surroundings, avoiding political gatherings and demonstrations and staying in close contact with their local sponsors, diplomatic representation, or security staff. **The U.S. Department of State's Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, updated on 11 May 2001, is reproduced below.**

"The U.S. Government has learned that American citizens abroad may be the target of a terrorist threat from extremist groups with links to Usama Bin Ladin's Al-Qaida organization. In the past, such individuals have not distinguished between official and civilian targets. As always, we take this information seriously. U.S. Government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. In addition, U.S. Government facilities have and will continue to temporarily close or suspend public services as necessary to review their security posture and ensure its adequacy. In light of the above, U.S. citizens are urged to maintain a high

level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness to reduce their vulnerability. Americans should maintain a low profile, vary routes and times for all required travel, and treat mail and packages from unfamiliar sources with suspicion. In addition, American citizens are also urged to avoid contact with any suspicious, unfamiliar objects, and to report the presence of the objects to local authorities. Vehicles should not be left unattended, if at all possible, and should be kept locked at all times.

U.S. Government personnel overseas have been advised to take the same precautions. U.S. citizens planning to travel abroad should consult the Department of States Public Announcements, Travel Warnings, Consular Information Sheets <[http://travel.state.gov/travel\\_warnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html)>, and regional travel brochures <[http://travel.state.gov/travel\\_pubs.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel_pubs.html)>, all of which are available at the Consular Affairs Internet Website at <http://travel.state.gov>. We will continue to provide updated information should it become available. American citizens overseas may contact the American

Citizens Services unit of the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate by telephone or fax for up-to-date information on security conditions. In addition, American citizens in need of emergency assistance should telephone the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate before visiting the Embassy or Consulate.

Department of State travel information and publications are available at Internet address:

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

U.S. travelers may hear recorded information by calling the Department of State in Washington, D.C. at **202-647-5225** from their touch-tone telephone, or receive information by automated telefax by dialing **202-647-3000** from their fax machine. This Public Announcement replaces the Public Announcement - Worldwide Caution of January 5, 2001 to alert Americans that they may be the target of a terrorist threat. **This Public Announcement expires on August 11, 2001.**

***U.S. Consuls  
Help Americans  
Abroad***



There are U.S. embassies in more than 160 capital cities of the world. Each embassy has a consular section. Consular officers in consular sections of embassies do two things:

- they issue visas to foreigners;
- they help U.S. citizens abroad.

There are also consular officers at about 60 U.S. consulates general and 20 U.S. consulates around the world. (Consulates general and consulates are regional offices of embassies.) U.S. consuls usually are assisted by local employees who are citizens of the host country. Because of the growing number of Americans traveling abroad, and the relatively small number of consuls, the expertise of local employees is invaluable.

In this pamphlet, we highlight ways in which consular officers can assist you while you are traveling or residing abroad.

To help us help you while you are abroad, register

with the nearest U.S. embassy or consular.

This makes it easier for consular officers to reach you in an emergency or to replace a lost passport. Consular officers provide a range of services -- some emergency, some nonemergency.

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

### ***Replace a Passport***

If you lose your passport, a consul can issue you a replacement, often within 24 hours. If you believe your passport has been stolen, first report the theft to the local police and get a police declaration.

### ***Help Find Medical Assistance***



If you get sick, you can contact a consular officer for a list of local doctors, dentists, and medical specialists, along with other medical information. If you are injured or become seriously ill, a consul will help you find medical assistance and, at your

request, inform your family or friends. (Consider getting private medical insurance before you travel, to cover the high cost of getting you back to the U.S. for hospital care in the event of a medical emergency.)

### ***Help Get Funds***



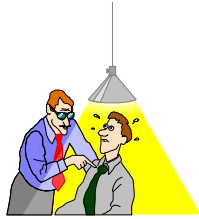
Should you lose all your money and other financial resources, consular officers can help you contact your family, bank, or employer to arrange for them to send you funds. In some cases, these funds can be wired to you through the Department of State.

### ***Help In an Emergency***

Your family may need to reach you because of an emergency at home or because they are worried about your welfare. They should call the State Department's Overseas Citizens Services at **(202) 647-5225**. The State Department will relay the message to the consular officers in the country in which you are traveling. Consular officers will attempt to locate you,

pass on urgent messages, and, consistent with the Privacy Act, report back to your family.

### ***Visit In Jail***



If you are arrested, you should ask the authorities to notify a U.S. consul. Consuls cannot get you out of jail (when you are in a foreign country you are subject to its laws). However, they can work to protect your legitimate interests and ensure you are not discriminated against. They can provide a list of local attorneys, visit you, inform you generally about local laws, and contact your family and friends. Consular officers can transfer money, food, and clothing to the prison authorities from your family or friends. They can try to get relief if you are held under inhumane or unhealthful conditions.

### ***Make Arrangements after the Death of an American***

When an American dies abroad, a consular officer notifies the Americans family and informs them about options and costs for disposition of remains. Costs for preparing and returning a body to the U.S. may be high and must be paid by the family. Often, local laws and procedures make returning a body to the U.S. for burial a lengthy process. A consul prepares a Report of Death based on the local death certificate; this is forwarded to the next of kin for use in estate and insurance matters.

### ***Help In A Disaster/Evacuation***

If you are caught up in a natural disaster or civil disturbance, you should let your relatives know as soon as possible that you are safe, or contact a U.S. consul who will pass that message to your family through the State Department. Be resourceful. U.S. officials will do everything they can to contact you and advise you. However, they must give priority to helping Americans who have been hurt or are in immediate danger. In a disaster, consuls face the same constraints you do - lack of electricity or fuel, interrupted phone lines, closed airports.

## **NONEMERGENCY SERVICES**

### ***Issue A Consular Report of Birth***

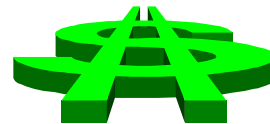


A child born abroad to U.S. citizens parents usually acquires U.S. citizenship at birth. The parents should contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to have a "Report of Birth Abroad of a U.S. Citizen" prepared. This is proof of citizenship for all purposes.

### ***Issue A Passport***

Consuls issue approximately 200,000 passports abroad each year. Many of these are issued to persons whose current passports have expired.

### ***Distribute Federal Benefits Payments***



Over a half-million people living overseas receive monthly federal benefit

payments. In many countries, the checks are mailed to the U.S. embassy or consulate and distributed through the local postal service.

### ***Assist In Child Custody Disputes***



In an international custody dispute, a consul can try to locate the child abroad, monitor the child's welfare, and provide general information to the American parent about laws and procedures which may be used to effect the child's return to the United States. Consuls may not take custody of a child, or help a parent regain custody of a child illegally or by force or deception.

### ***Help In Other Ways***

Consuls handle personal estates of deceased U.S. citizens, assist with absentee voting and Selective Service registration, notarize documents, advise on property claims, and provide U.S. tax forms. They also perform such functions as adjudicating

U.S. citizenship claims and assisting U.S. courts in legal matters.

### **WHAT CONSULAR OFFICERS CANNOT DO**

In addition to the qualifications noted above, consular officers cannot act as travel agents, banks, lawyers, investigators, or law enforcement officers. Please do not expect them to find you employment, get you residence or driving permits, act as interpreters, search for missing luggage, or settle disputes with hotel managers. They can, however, tell you how to get help on these and other matters. If you need to pick up mail or messages while traveling, some banks and international credit card companies handle mail for customers at their overseas branches. General Delivery (Poste Restante) services at post offices in most countries will hold mail for you.

### **PRIVACY ACT**

The provisions of the Privacy Act are designed to protect the privacy rights of Americans. Occasionally they complicate a consul's efforts to assist Americans. As a general rule, consular

officers may not reveal information regarding an individual American's location, welfare, intentions, or problems to anyone, including the family members and Congressional representatives, without the expressed consent of that individual. Although sympathetic to the distress this can cause concerned families, consular officers must comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act.

**For more information, contact: Overseas Citizens Services, Department of State, Room 4811, Washington, D.C. 20520. Department of State Publication 10176 June 1994**

### **A SAFE TRIP ABROAD**



### **Foreword**

Millions of U.S. citizens travel abroad each year and use their U.S. passports. When you travel abroad, the odds are

in your favor that you will have a safe and incident-free trip. However, crime and violence, as well as unexpected difficulties, do befall U.S. citizens in all parts of the world. No one is better able to tell you this than U.S. consular officers who work in the more than 250 U.S. embassies and consulates around the globe. Every day of the year U.S. embassies and consulates receive calls from American citizens in distress.

Fortunately, most problems can be solved over the telephone or by a visit of the U.S. citizen to the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. But there are less fortunate occasions when U.S. consular officers are called on to meet U.S. citizens at foreign police stations, hospitals, prisons and even at morgues. In these cases, the assistance that consular officers can offer is specific but limited. In the hope of helping you avoid unhappy meetings with consular officers when you go abroad, we have prepared the following travel tips.

**Please have a safe trip abroad.**

## BEFORE YOU GO

### *What to Bring*



Safety begins when you pack. To avoid being a target, dress conservatively. A flashy wardrobe or one that is too casual can mark you as a tourist. As much as possible, avoid the appearance of affluence.

Always try to travel light. If you do, you can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.

Carry the minimum amount of valuables necessary for your trip and plan a place or places to conceal them. Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to conceal them in several places rather than putting them all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets, which are easy

targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

If you wear glasses, pack an extra pair. Bring them and any medicines you need in your carry-on luggage.

To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring a copy of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country first.

Bring travelers checks and one or two major credit cards instead of cash.

Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.

Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality and if possible, lock your luggage.

Consider getting a telephone calling card. It is a convenient way of keeping in touch. If you have one, verify that you can use it from your overseas location(s). Access numbers to U.S. operators are published in many international newspapers. Find out your access number before you go.



### ***What to Leave Behind***

Don't bring anything you would hate to lose. Leave at home:

- valuable or expensive-looking jewelry,
- irreplaceable family objects,
- all unnecessary credit cards.

Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home in case they need to contact you in an emergency.

### ***A Few Things to Bring and Leave Behind***

Make two photocopies of your passport identification page, airline tickets, driver's license and the credit cards that you plan to bring with you. Leave one photocopy of this data with family or friends at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry your valuables.

Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your traveler's checks with a friend or relative at home. Carry your copy with you in a separate place and, as you cash the checks, cross them off the list.

### ***What to Learn About Before You Go***



### ***Security.***

The Department of State's Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They describe unusual entry, currency regulations or unusual health conditions, the crime and security situation, political

disturbances, areas of instability, special information about driving and road conditions and drug penalties. They also provide addresses and emergency telephone numbers for U.S. embassies and consulates. In general, the sheets do not give advice. Instead, they describe conditions so travelers can make informed decisions about their trips.

In some dangerous situations, however, the Department of State recommends that Americans defer travel to a country. In such a case, a Travel Warning is issued for the country in addition to its Consular Information Sheet.

Public Announcements are a means to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or Transnational conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. They are issued when there is a perceived threat usually involving Americans as a particular target group. In the past, Public Announcements have been issued to deal with short-term coups, pre-election disturbances, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.



Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements are available at the 13 regional passport agencies; at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad; or by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

**Overseas Citizens Services, Room 4811, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-4818.**

They are also available through airline computer reservation systems when you or your travel agent make your international air reservations.

**In addition, you can access Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements 24-hours a day in several ways.**

#### ***Telephone***

To listen to them, call **(202) 647-5225** from a touch-tone phone.

#### ***Fax***

From your fax machine, dial **(202) 647-3000**, using the handset as you would a regular telephone. The

system prompts you on how to proceed.

#### ***Internet***

Information about travel and consular services is available on the Bureau of Consular Affairs' World Wide Web home page.

The address is:

<http://travel.state.gov>.

It includes Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements, passport and visa information, travel publications, background on international adoption and international child abduction services and international legal assistance. It also links to the State Department's main Internet site at:

<http://www.state.gov>

which contains current foreign affairs information.

#### ***Consular Affairs Bulletin Board***

If you have a personal computer, modem and communication software, you can access the Consular Affairs Bulletin Board (CABB). To view or download the documents from a computer and modem, dial the CABB on

**(301) 946-4400.**

The login is **travel**;

the password is **info**.

There is no charge to use these systems other than normal long distance charges.

#### ***Local Laws and Customs***

When you leave the United States, you are subject to the laws of the country where you are.

Therefore, before you go, learn as much as you can about the local laws and customs of the places you plan to visit. Good resources are your library, your travel agent, and the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus of the countries you will visit. In addition, keep track of what is being reported in the media about recent developments in those countries.

#### ***THINGS TO ARRANGE BEFORE YOU GO***

##### ***Your Itinerary.***

As much as possible, plan to stay in larger hotels that have more elaborate security. Safety experts recommend booking a room from the second to seventh floors above



ground level to deter easy entrance from outside, but low enough for fire equipment to reach.

Because take-off and landing are the most dangerous times of a flight, book non-stop flights when possible. When there is a choice of airport or airline, ask your travel agent about comparative safety records.

### ***Legal Documents***

Have your affairs at home in order. If you leave a current will, insurance documents, and power of attorney with your family or a friend, you can feel secure about traveling and will be prepared for any emergency that may arise while you are away. If you have minor children, consider making guardianship arrangements for them.

### ***Credit.***

Make a note of the credit limit on each credit card that you bring. Make certain not to charge over that amount on your trip. In some countries, Americans have been arrested for innocently exceeding their credit limit. Ask your credit card company how to report the loss of your card from abroad. **800 numbers do not work**

**from abroad**, but your company should have a number that you can call while you are overseas.

### ***Insurance.***

Find out if your personal property insurance covers you for loss or theft abroad. More importantly, check if your health insurance covers you abroad. Medicare and Medicaid do not provide payment for medical care outside the U.S. Even if your health insurance will reimburse you for medical care that you pay for abroad, normal health insurance does not pay for medical evacuation from a remote area or from a country where medical facilities are inadequate. Consider purchasing one of the short-term health and emergency assistance policies designed for travelers. Also, make sure that the plan you purchase includes medical evacuation in the event of an accident or serious illness.

## **PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHILE TRAVELING**

### ***Safety on the Street***

Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in or avoid areas where you are likely to be victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals and marginal areas of cities.

Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets. Try not to travel alone at night.

Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.

Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments. Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.

Avoid scam artists. Beware of strangers who approach you, offering bargains or to be your guide.

Beware of pickpockets. They often have an accomplice who will:

- jostle you,
- ask you for directions or the time,
- point to something spilled on your clothing,
- or distract you by creating a disturbance.

A child or even a woman carrying a baby can be a pickpocket. Beware of groups of vagrant children who create a distraction while picking your pocket.

Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.

Try to seem purposeful when you move about.

Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. When possible, ask directions only from individuals in authority.

Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.

Learn a few phrases in the local language so you can signal your need for help, the police, or a doctor. Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

If you are confronted, don't fight back. Give up your valuables. Your money and passport can be replaced, but you cannot.

### ***Safety in Your Hotel***

Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.

Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe.

Let someone know when you expect to return if you are out late at night.

If you are alone, do not get on an elevator if there is a suspicious-looking person inside.

Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Know how to report a fire. Be sure you know where the nearest fire exit and alternate exits are located. Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit. This could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.

### ***Safety on Public Transportation***

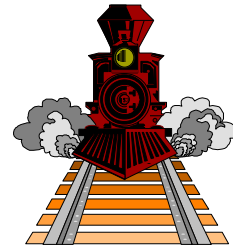
If a country has a pattern of tourists being targeted by criminals on public transport, that information is mentioned in the Consular Information Sheets under the "Crime Information" section.

### ***Taxis.***



Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.

### ***Trains.***



Well organized, systematic robbery of passengers on trains along popular tourists routes is a serious problem. It is more common at night and especially on overnight trains.

If you see your way being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close to you from behind, move away. This can happen in the corridor of the train or on the platform or station.

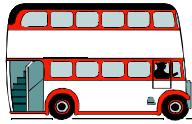
Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers. Criminals may also spray sleeping gas in train compartments.

Where possible, lock your compartment. If it cannot be locked securely, take turns sleeping in shifts with your traveling companions.

If that is not possible, stay awake. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage, strap your valuables to you and sleep on top of them as much as possible.

Do not be afraid to alert authorities if you feel threatened in any way. Extra police are often assigned to ride trains on routes where crime is a serious problem.

### **Buses.**



The same type of criminal activity found on trains can be found on public buses on popular tourist routes. For example, tourists have been drugged and robbed while sleeping on buses or in bus stations. In some countries whole bus loads of passengers have been held up and robbed by gangs of bandits.

### **Safety when You Drive**

When you rent a car, don't go for the exotic; choose a type commonly available locally. Where possible, ask that markings that identify it as a rental car be removed. Make certain it is in good repair. If available,

choose a car with universal door locks and power windows, features that give the driver better control of access to the car. An air conditioner, when available, is also a safety feature, allowing you to drive with windows closed. Thieves can and do snatch purses through open windows of moving cars.

Keep car doors locked at all times. Wear seat belts.

As much as possible, avoid driving at night.

Don't leave valuables in the car. If you must carry things with you, keep them out of sight locked in the trunk.

Don't park your car on the street overnight. If the hotel or municipality does not have a parking garage or other secure area, select a well-lit area.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

Don't get out of the car if there are suspicious looking individuals nearby. Drive away.

### **Patterns Of Crime Against Motorists**



In many places frequented by tourists, including areas of southern Europe,

victimization of motorists has been refined to an art. Where it is a problem, U.S. embassies are aware of it and consular officers try to work with local authorities to warn the public about the dangers. In some locations, these efforts at public awareness have paid off, reducing the frequency of incidents. You may also wish to ask your rental car agency for advice on avoiding robbery while visiting tourist destinations.

Carjackers and thieves operate at gas stations, parking lots, in city traffic and along the highway. Be suspicious of anyone who hails you or tries to get your attention when you are in or near your car.

Criminals use ingenious ploys. They may masquerade as good samaritans, offering help for tires that they claim are flat or that they have made flat. Or they may flag down a motorist, ask for assistance, and then steal the rescuer's luggage or car. Usually they work in groups, one person carrying on the pretense while the others rob you.

Other criminals get your attention with abuse, either trying to drive you off the road, or causing an "accident" by rear-ending

you or creating a "fender bender."

In some urban areas, thieves don't waste time on ploys, they simply smash car windows at traffic lights, grab your valuables or your car and get away. In cities around the world, "defensive driving" has come to mean more than avoiding auto accidents; it means keeping an eye out for potentially criminal pedestrians, cyclists and scooter riders.

### **How To Handle Money Safely**



To avoid carrying large amounts of cash, change your traveler's checks only as you need currency. Countersign traveler's checks only in front of the person who will cash them.

Do not flash large amounts of money when paying a bill. Make sure your credit card is returned to you after each transaction.

Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money, buy airline tickets or purchase souvenirs. Do not change

money on the black market.

If your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and as an explanation of your plight. After reporting missing items to the police, report the loss or theft of:

- travelers checks to the nearest agent of the issuing company,
- credit cards to the issuing company,
- airline tickets to the airline or travel agent,
- passport to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

### **How To Avoid Legal Difficulties**

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws and are under its jurisdiction NOT the protection of the U.S. Constitution.

You can be arrested overseas for actions that may be either legal or considered minor infractions in the United States. Be aware of what is considered criminal in the country where you are. Consular Information Sheets include information

on unusual patterns of arrests in various countries when appropriate.

Some of the offenses for which U.S. citizens have been arrested abroad are:

### **Drug Violations.**



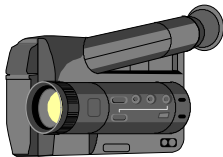
More than 1/3 of U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad are held on drug charges. Some countries do not distinguish between possession and trafficking. Many countries have mandatory sentences - even for possession of a small amount of marijuana or cocaine. A number of Americans have been arrested for possessing prescription drugs, particularly tranquilizers and amphetamines, that they purchased legally in certain Asian countries and then brought to some countries in the Middle East where they are illegal. Other U.S. citizens have been arrested for purchasing prescription drugs abroad in quantities that local authorities suspected were for commercial use. If in doubt about foreign drug laws, ask local authorities or the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

## **Possession of Firearms.**

The places where U.S. citizens most often come into difficulties for illegal possession of firearms are nearby - Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean.

Sentences for possession of firearms in Mexico can be up to **30 years**. In general, firearms, even those legally registered in the U.S., cannot be brought into a country unless a permit is first obtained from the embassy or a consulate of that country and the firearm is registered with foreign authorities on arrival. (Note: If you take firearms or ammunition to another country, you cannot bring them back into the U.S. unless you register them with U.S. Customs before you leave the U.S.)

## **Photography.**



In many countries you can be harassed or detained for photographing such things as police and military installations, government buildings, border areas and transportation facilities. If

you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs.

## **Purchasing Antiques.**



Americans have been arrested for purchasing souvenirs that were, or looked like antiques and which local customs authorities believed were national treasures. This is especially true in Turkey, Egypt and Mexico. In countries where antiques are important, document your purchases as reproductions if that is the case, or if they are authentic, secure the necessary export permit (usually from the national museum).

## **Protection Against Terrorism**



Terrorist acts occur at random and unpredictably, making it impossible to protect oneself absolutely. The first and best protection is to avoid travel

to unsafe areas where there has been a persistent record of terrorist attacks or kidnapping. The vast majority of foreign states have good records of maintaining public order and protecting residents and visitors within their borders from terrorism.

Most terrorist attacks are the result of long and careful planning. Just as a car thief will first be attracted to an unlocked car with the key in the ignition, terrorists are looking for defenseless, easily accessible targets who follow predictable patterns. The chances that a tourist, traveling with an unpublished program or itinerary, would be the victim of terrorism are slight. In addition, many terrorist groups, seeking publicity for political causes within their own country or region, may not be looking for American targets.

Nevertheless, the following pointers may help you avoid becoming a target of opportunity. They should be considered as adjuncts to the tips listed in the previous sections on how to protect yourself against the far greater likelihood of being a victim of crime. These precautions may provide some degree of protection, and can serve as practical and

psychological deterrents to would-be terrorists.

- Schedule direct flights if possible and avoid stops in high-risk airports or areas.
- Consider other options for travel, such as trains.
- Be aware of what you discuss with strangers or what may be overheard by others.
- Try to minimize the time spent in the public area of an airport, which is a less protected area. Move quickly from the check-in counter to the secured areas. On arrival, leave the airport as soon as possible.
- As much as possible, avoid luggage tags, dress and behavior which may identify you as an American.
- Keep an eye out for suspicious abandoned packages or briefcases. Report them to airport security or other authorities and leave the area promptly.
- Avoid obvious terrorist targets such as places where Americans and Westerners are known to congregate.

## **Travel To High-Risk Areas**

If you must travel in an area where there has been a history of terrorist attacks or kidnapping, make it a habit to:

- Discuss with your family what they would do in the event of an emergency. Make sure your affairs are in order before leaving home.
- Register with the U.S. embassy or consulate upon arrival.
- Remain friendly but be cautious about discussing personal matters, your itinerary or program.
- Leave no personal or business papers in your hotel room.
- Watch for people following you or "loiterers" observing your comings and goings.
- Keep a mental note of safehavens, such as police stations, hotels, and hospitals.
- Let someone else know what your travel plans are. Keep them informed if you change your plans.
- -- Avoid predictable times and routes of

travel and report any suspicious activity to local police, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

- Select your own taxicabs at random. Don't take a vehicle that is not clearly identified as a taxi.
- Compare the face of the driver with the one posted on his or her license.
- If possible, travel with others.
- Be sure of the identity of visitors before opening the door of your hotel room. Don't meet strangers at unknown or remote locations.
- Refuse unexpected packages. -- Formulate a plan of action for what you will do if a bomb explodes or there is gunfire nearby.
- Check for loose wires or other suspicious activity around your car.
- Be sure your vehicle is in good operating condition in case you need to resort to high-speed or evasive driving.
- Drive with car windows closed in crowded streets. Bombs can be

thrown through open windows.

- If you are ever in a situation where somebody starts shooting, drop to the floor or get down as low as possible. Don't move until you are sure the danger has passed. Do not attempt to help rescuers and do not pick up a weapon. If possible, shield yourself behind or under a solid object. If you must move, crawl on your stomach.

### **Hijacking/Hostage Situations**

While every hostage situation is different and the chance of becoming a hostage is remote, some considerations are important.

The U.S. government's policy not to negotiate with terrorists is firm - to do so would only increase the risk of further hostage taking. When Americans are abducted overseas, we look to the host government to exercise its responsibility under international law to protect all persons within its territories and to bring about the safe release of hostages. We work closely with these governments from the

outset of a hostage-taking incident to ensure that our citizens and other innocent victims are released as quickly and safely as possible.

Normally, the most dangerous phases of a hijacking or hostage situation are the beginning and, if there is a rescue attempt, the end. At the outset, the terrorists typically are tense, high-strung and may behave irrationally. It is extremely important that you remain calm and alert and manage your own behavior.

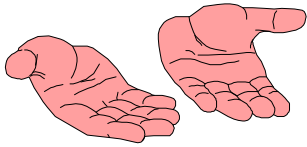
- Avoid resistance and sudden or threatening movements. Do not struggle or try to escape unless you are certain of being successful. -- Make a concerted effort to relax. Breathe deeply and prepare yourself mentally, physically and emotionally for the possibility of a long ordeal.
- Try to remain inconspicuous, avoid direct eye contact and the appearance of observing your captors' actions.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages. Consume little food and drink.
- Consciously put yourself in a mode of passive cooperation. Talk normally. Do not complain, avoid belligerency, and comply with all orders and instructions.
- If questioned, keep your answers short. Don't volunteer information or make unnecessary overtures.
- Don't try to be a hero, endangering yourself and others.
- Maintain your sense of personal dignity and gradually increase your requests for personal comforts. Make these requests in a reasonable low-key manner.
- If you are involved in a lengthier, drawn-out situation, try to establish a rapport with your captors, avoiding political discussions or other confrontational subjects.
- Establish a daily program of mental and physical activity. Don't be afraid to ask for anything you need or want - medicines, books, pencils, and papers.
- Eat what they give you, even if it does not look



or taste appetizing. A loss of appetite and weight is normal.

- Think positively. Avoid a sense of despair. Rely on your inner resources. Remember that you are a valuable commodity to your captors. It is important to them to keep you alive and well.

## ASSISTANCE ABROAD



If you plan to stay more than two weeks in one place, if you are in an area experiencing civil unrest or a natural disaster or if you are planning travel to a remote area, it is advisable to register at the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. This will make it easier if someone at home needs to locate you urgently or in the unlikely event that you need to be evacuated in an emergency. It will also facilitate the issuance of a new passport should yours be lost or stolen.

Another reason to contact the Consular Section is to obtain updated information

on the security situation in a country.

If you are ill or injured, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for a list of local physicians and medical facilities. If the illness is serious, consular officers can help you find medical assistance from this list and, at your request, will inform your family or friends. If necessary, a consul can assist in the transfer of funds from family or friends in the United States. Payment of hospital and other medical expenses is your responsibility.

If you run out of money overseas and have no other options, consular officers can help you get in touch with your family, friends, bank or employer and inform them how to wire funds to you.

Should you find yourself in legal difficulty, contact a consular officer immediately. Consular officers cannot serve as attorneys, give legal advice, or get you out of jail. What they can do is provide a list of local attorneys who speak English and who may have had experience in representing U.S. citizens. If you are arrested, consular officials will visit you, advise you of your rights under local laws and

ensure that you are held under humane conditions and are treated fairly under local law. A consular officer will also contact your family or friends if you desire. When necessary, consuls can transfer money from home for you and will try to get relief for you, including food and clothing in countries where this is a problem. If you are detained, remember that under international agreements and practice, you have the right to talk to the U.S. consul. If you are denied this right, be persistent. Try to have someone get in touch for you.

Thank you for taking the time to become an informed traveler. We wish you a safe and wonderful journey.

## Planning Another Trip?



The following pamphlets may be ordered from the:

**Superintendent of  
Documents, U.S.  
Government Printing  
Office, Washington,  
D.C. 20420,  
Tel. 202-512-1800:**

*Your Trip Abroad (\$1.25)*  
*A Safe Trip Abroad*  
*Tips for Americans*  
*Residing Abroad*  
*Travel Tips for Older*  
*Americans*  
*Tips for Travelers to*  
*Canada*  
*Tips for Travelers to the*  
*Caribbean*  
*Tips for Travelers to*  
*Central and South*  
*America*  
*Tips for Travelers to*  
*Mexico*  
*Tips for Travelers to the*  
*Middle East and North*  
*Africa (\$1.50)*  
*Tips for Travelers to the*  
*People's Republic of*  
*China*  
*Tips for Travelers to*  
*Russia and the Newly*  
*Independent States*  
*Tips for Travelers to South*  
*Asia*  
*Tips for Travelers to Sub-*  
*Saharan Africa (\$1.50)*

The price of each publication is about \$1.00, except where noted. Prices and availability are subject to change without notice. Please check with the Government Printing Office for more information.

General visa information for these and other countries are available in Foreign Entry Requirements. Information on how, when and where to apply for your U.S. passport is provided in

Passports: Applying for Them the Easy Way. Both publications may be ordered for 50 cents each from the

**Consumer Information Center,**  
**Pueblo, Colorado 81009.**

**Bureau of Consular Affairs**  
**Revised August 1996**

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#### Travel Publications

US State Department - Travel Warnings & Consular Information

#### **What Are Travel Warnings, Consular Information Sheets & Public Announcements?**

**Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Countries where avoidance of travel is recommended will have Travel Warnings

as well as Consular Information Sheets.

**Public Announcements** are a means to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or Trans-national conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. They are made any time there is a perceived threat and usually have Americans as a particular target group. In the past, Public Announcements have been issued to deal with short-term coups, bomb threats to airlines, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

**Consular Information Sheets** are available for every country of the world. They include such information as location of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. If an unstable condition exists in a country that is not severe enough to warrant a Travel Warning, a description of the condition(s) may be included under an optional section entitled

"Safety/Security." On limited occasions, we also restate in this section any U.S. Embassy advice given to official employees.

Consular Information Sheets generally do not include advice, but present information in a factual manner so the traveler can make his or her own decisions concerning travel to a particular country. If you are looking for information on any of the U.S. territories and possessions, such as the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam or American Samoa, you can go to the Department of the Interior web site. Select a letter for the country about which you'd like information.

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Foot and Mouth Disease  
Fact Sheet (May 2001)

Behavior Modification  
Facilities Fact Sheet (May  
1999)

Anthrax Vaccine Fact  
Sheet (June 1999)

Chemical/Biological  
Warfare Fact Sheet  
(October 1999)

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## **“QUOTES” ON TRAVEL:**

Those who visit foreign nations, but associate only with their own countrymen, change their climate, but not their customs.\_They see new meridians, but the same men; and with heads as empty as their pockets, return home with traveled bodies, but untravelled minds.\_Colton

The proper means of increasing the love we bear to our native country is to reside some time in a foreign one.\_Shenstone

One telling Socrates that such an one was nothing improved by his travels, "I

very well believed it," said he. "for he took himself along with him."\_Montaigne

**Quotes taken from the  
*Dictionary of Thoughts, A  
Cyclopedia of Laconic  
Quotations from the best  
authors of the world, both  
ancient and  
modern\_\_copywrite 1904***